

Message Text

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SUBJ: PUERTO RICO TRADE MISSION: INITIAL REPORT

REF: A. BOGOTA 10534; B. BOGOTA 10202; C. BOGOTA 9665;
D. BOGOTA 8693; E. BOGOTA 8486;

SUMMARY: BASIC FRAMEWORK OF PUERTO RICO TRADE MISSION SUCCESSFUL, WITH MAJOR GOALS ACCOMPLISHED. INITIAL SALES FIGURES REPORTED OF OVER ONE-QUARTER MILLION DOLLARS, WITH TWELVE-MONTH PROJECTION OF APPROXIMATELY TWO AND ONE-HALF MILLION DOLLARS. MISSION DIRECTOR BLASININ HAD VALUABLE MEETINGS WITH GOC AND INTERNATIONAL FAIR OFFICIALS WHICH MAY LEAD TO PUERTO RICAN PARTICIPATION IN FAIR. EXCELLENT MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE MISSION BOTH PRECEDING ITS ARRIVAL AND DURING ITS STAY IN BOGOTA. UNEXPECTED ABSENCE OF 4 OUT OF 10 MISSION MEMEBERS CREATED SOME PROBLEMS FOR EMBASSY COMMERCIAL STAFF AND PREVENTED EVEN MORE SUCCESSFUL MISSION.

1. SIX MISSION MEMBERS ARRIVED AS SCHEDULED, STAURDAY NOVMEBER 19, WITH BLASINI AND INDUSTRY ADVISOR BURNS ARRIVING PREVIOUS EVENING FROM BRAZIL. ALL ARRIVALS MET AT AIRPORT. UNFORTUNATELY, FOUR REMAINING MISSION MEMBERS CANCELLED TRIP WITHOUT EMBASSY BEING INFORMED.

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2. RESULTS OF TRADE MISSION WERE POSITIVE. IMMEDIATE SALES WERE REPORTED AT 287 THOUSAND DOLLARS, WITH A 12-MONTH PROJECTION OF 2.4 MILLION DOLLARS. MASTERLITE AND SALVO WERE PARTICULARLY PLEASED, WITH MANUFACTURING JOINT VENTURES LIKELY TO BEGIN IN 1978. LARGEST SALES FIGURES WERE REPORTED BY PUERTO RICO IRON WORKS (150 THOUSAND/1

MILLION), HUDSON LOCK (43 THOUSAND/384 THOUSAND), AND FULLER ADHESIVES (39 THOUSAND/366 THOUSAND). BOTH WRITTEN AND ORAL COMMENTS BY THE MISSION MEMBERS HAD HIGH PRAISE FOR THE WORK ON THEIR BEHALF BY THE EMBASSY. MISSION MEMBERS GENERALLY KEPT BUSY SCHEDULES AND TOOKD THEIR WORK SERIOUSLY.

3. TWO APPOINTMENTS MADE FOR BLASINI SHOULD BE HIGHLIGHTED. FIRST, MISSION CONTROL OFFICER AND FSL WORKING ON XII BOGOTA INTERNATIONAL FAIR TOOK BLASINI TO FAIRGROUNDS AND TO MEETING WITH ASST FAIR MANAGER. BLASINI TOURED US PAVILLION SPACE AND INDICATED AN INTEREST IN HAVING PUERTO RICAN EXHIBITORS AT THE FAIR, POSSIBLY AS PART OF A PUERTO RICAN SECTION OF THE US PAVILLION. SECOND, BLASINI AND GONZALEZ WERE ACCOMPANIED BY EMBASSY OFFICERS TO MEETING WITH GOC OFFICIALS FROM INCOMEX (COLOMBIAN INSTITUTE FOR FOREIGN TRADE), PROEXPO (EXPORT PROMOTION FUND), MINISTRY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS, AND OTHER AGENCIES. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF COLOMBIAN TRADE PROCEDURES WAS PRESENTED, INCLUDING DISCUSSION OF LICENSING, AMID ENCOURAGING TALK OF INCREASING COLOMBIAN-PUERTO RICAN COMMERCIAL TIES.

4. MISSION HAD EXCELLENT ADVANCE PUBLICITY, WITH GONZALES BRADCASTS (PREVIOUSLY TAPED BY USIS DURING OCTOBER ADVANCE TRIP) FOR RADIO AND TELEVISION BEING AIRED WEEK PRECEDING MISSION. NEWSPAPER COVERAGE WAS ALSO GOOD, INCLUDING ARTICLES (MOSTLY TAKEN FROM USIS PRESS RELEASES) FOR SEVERAL DAYS
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PRECEDING THE BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS. PUBLICITY CONTINUED THROUGH THE DURATION OF THE MISSION, WITH A RECORD TURNOUT OF MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE PRESS CONFERENCE HELD ON NOV 21, AND WITH A PHOTO FROM THE RECEPTION PRINTED IN EL TIEMPO AS LATE AS FRIDAY, NOV. 25. SUCH EXTENSIVE COVERAGE MAY HAVE BEEN FORTHCOMING, AT LEAST IN PART, BECAUSE SEVERAL MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES WERE INVITED TO THE COCKTAIL-BUFFET RECEPTION. OTHER POSTS AND USDOC MAY WANT TO KEEP THIS TACTIC IN MIND FOR THE FUTURE. RECEPTION ATTENDANCE WAS EXCELLENT, PERHAPS CLOSE TO 150 PEOPLE.

5. RESULTS OF MISSION COULD HAVE BEEN EVEN MORE POSITIVE WERE IT NOT FOR LAST-MINUTE CANCELLATION BY FOUR MEMBERS. EMBASSY WAS UNAWARE OF CANCELLATION UNTIL MISSION ARRIVED IN BOGOTA AND OVER 50 APPOINTMENTS MADE FOR MISSING MISSION MEMBERS HAD TO BE CANCELLED OR HANDLED BY OTHER PARTICIPANS. THIS PROVED EMBARRASING AND SOMEWHAT DAMAGING TO EMBASSY CREDIBILITY FOR THE FUTURE. INITIAL APPOINTMENTS FOR AMERICAN OPTICAL, TII INDUSTRIES, SERVICE UNLIMITED, AND LUGARES DEL CARIBE WERE CANCELLED, BUT SECRETARY BLASINI THEN DECIDED THAT HE, GONZALES, AND ANY OTHER MISSION MEMEBER WHO HAD SOME SPARE TIME WOULD HANDLE T I APPOINTMENTS FOR THE MISSION

MEMBERS USING COMPANY CATALOGS AND BROCHURES THAT WERE ON HAND. THIS WAS A DIFFICULT TASK, OF COURSE, BUT IN THIS REGARD MISSION LEADER ELEUTERIO MATOS (FULLER ADHESIVES) SHOULD BE SINGLED OUT FOR MAKING GREAT EFFORTS, EVEN TO EXTENT OF KEEPING HIS OWN APPOINTMENTS WAITING WHILE HE FINISHED MEETING ON A MISSING MEMBER'S BEHALF. MATOS WOULD BE WELCOMED ON ANY FUTURE MISSION. BLASINI AND GONZALES INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD SEE THAT ACTIVE FOLLOW-UP FOR MISSING MEMBERS WOULD BE GENERATED.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT USDOC KEEP TABS ON THIS FOLLOW-UP AND KEEP EMBASSY INFORMED OF STEPS TAKEN BY PRDOC AND NO-SHOW COMPANIES. EMBASSY, OF COURSE, WILL BE PLEASED TO PROVIDE FOLLOW-UP ASSISTANCE.
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7. MAJOR POINT IN THE DE-BRIEFING WAS THAT THE SUCCESS OF MISSION HINGED LARGELY ON THE ACCURACY OF INFORMATION SENT TO POSTS IN ADVANCE, FOR PURPOSES OF PUBLICITY AND MAKING OF APPOINTMENTS. IN THAT RESPECT, MISSION MEMBERS REGRETED THE DELAYS IN SENDING COMPANY BROCHURES, CATALOGS, OR OTHER INFORMATION WHICH PREVENTED EMBASSY BOGOTA FROM MORE ACCURATELY PINPOINTING THE BEST PROSPECTS FOR FIRMS.
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